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○ VOLUME 1 | ○ ISSUE 10 | ○ YEAR 2006

Bayonet forward

Combined Task Force Chamberlain Makes Plans to Move to FOB Sharana

As we approach November, each of us within Combined Task Force Chamberlain is making sure we stay focused on our mission. That focus will help us accomplish our mission, meet our responsibilities, and keep each other safe and sane. A big part of that focus over the next two months will be the relocation of the 240th Engineer Group to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Sharana. In case you have not heard about this already, I wanted to make sure all of our families are aware of this upcoming change in location. It is being driven by operational aspects of our engineer mission, as well as by a need to reduce the population of military and civilian personnel on Bagram Air Field. With thousands of personnel living and working here, Bagram is bursting at the seams.

FOB Sharana is a good base, with a much higher elevation and located to the southeast of Bagram. It is under the command of one of my Engineer Battalion Commanders. He has done a great deal of work to improve both security and MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) at the base, and much work is currently underway to expand the base with new facilities. A runway near the base will give us good access to supplies and transportation. The base maintains an aggressive and proactive security posture and has only been attacked once within the past year. On the MWR side, there is a gym, PX, and phone/Internet connections. Having said that, however, I must say that this is a 'Forward' base – it is not a mini-city like Bagram. We will have more limited access to individual Internet connections and

phone calls, since the network connections are more limited than at Bagram. There is no commercial Internet provider. Living conditions will not be as plush as Bagram – there is no 'Green Beans Coffee', or Burger King, or Dairy Queen. But conditions will be livable and in some ways an improvement over where we are now.

As we get closer to mid-December the window for the move gets more predictable. About 60 of our Soldiers will relocate to FOB Sharana – the other 20 or so will remain at Bagram under the leadership of LTC Holbrook, my Deputy Commander. Those left at Bagram will be supporting various parts of our mission that cannot be moved 'downrange' to Sharana. Command Sergeant Major Luce and I will be among those who will move to Sharana. My personal viewpoint is that while I will miss some of the conveniences of Bagram, I am looking forward to living at Sharana. Bagram is like a boomtown in the old Wild West, whereas Sharana is like living in a small town on an island off the coast of Maine – fewer niceties, but a whole lot quieter.

We will keep you informed of the progress of the relocation. Your Soldiers are working



LTC(P) Swartz recently visited FOB Sharana to oversee the progress of the projects that will enable CTF Chamberlain to move there.

hard to make it a success and are going into this mission with their usual 'can-do' attitude and effort.

LTC(P) Les Swartz
CTF Chamberlain
Commanding



S-1 Section October News



CSM Luce presents Polish Commander LTC Paperski a shadow box of appreciation for his efforts with the Polish Engineers.

The S1 has been very busy this past month. We have processed many more awards and evaluations as well as organized two very important ceremonies with our Polish coalition partners. The first ceremony was the opening of the Forward Area Refueling Point constructed by the Polish and managed by CMS.



MEARNG Soldiers and Polish Soldiers stand together at a ceremony commemorating a construction project along the air strip at Bagram.

The second ceremony was the Polish Transfer of Authority. The Polish returned home after a 6 month tour in Afghanistan and were replaced by a new contingent of Polish Engineers.



10th MTN DIV CDR MG Freakley stands with incoming Polish Commander LTC Solomonow and outgoing Polish Commander LTC Paperski, and LTC(P) Swartz.

We now are getting ready for the "Move" South to FOB Sharana. Even though our S-1 section will not be moving we will adjust our operations to support the Brigade by forwarding mail, preparing Soldiers for R&R leave, and processing awards and evaluations.

This month we also celebrated a couple of Birthday's. SPC Legere convinced MSG Corriveau to wear a funny birthday hat to celebrate his B-Day on 10 OCT.



SPC Legere convinces MSG Corriveau to wear the birthday hat.

MAJ Ouellette was a hard person to pin down, but SPC Legere finally caught up with him to sing Happy Birthday and present him with a cupcake to celebrate his B-Day on 14 OCT.



MAJ Ouellette blows out a candle on his birthday with MAJ Darveau looking on be-



CTF Chamberlain S-1 MAJ Lajoie is shown with Polish S-1 MAJ Niesluchowski.

The head of the National Guard Bureau, Lieutenant General Blum visited Bagram, Afghanistan this month. While he was here, he came by the South Engineer Camp and visited the Tactical Operations Center (TOC). Soldiers from CTF Chamberlain are pictured with him on the observation deck.



CTF Chamberlain soldiers with National Guard Bureau Lieutenant General Blum.

1SG Hibl/MSG Hanning: MSG Hanning receiving Armed Forces Reserve Medal for 10 years of service, 1SG Hibl receiving the Armed Forces Reserve Medal for 20 years of service.



1SG Hibl & MSG Hanning are presented with length of service medals.

SFC Grimshaw was specifically named in a memo from the Air Force unit that sent the Pech River Bailey bridge parts from Italy to Afghanistan. He received the Air Force Coin of Excellence for tremendous work.

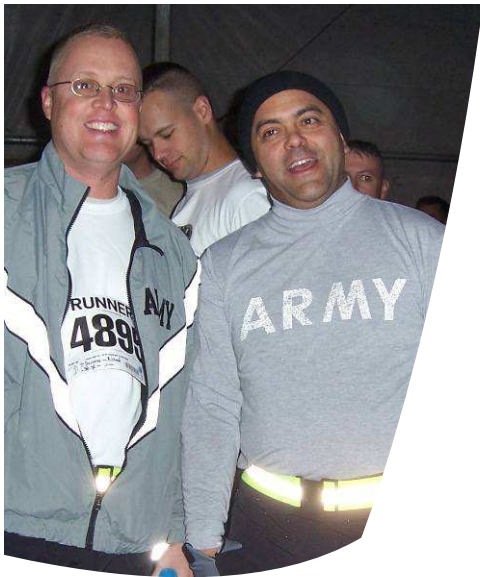


SFC Sean Grimshaw is presented with Air Force Coin of Excellence.

Article was submitted by S-1 NCOIC SFC William Donlon



S3 Section



MAJ Darveau, LTC Morton, ILT Stickney, and MAJ Ouellette prepare to run the Army 10 Miler.

The S3 section continues to do a phenomenal job – We are more than half way done our tour here in Afghanistan! What's not to like? The Halloween decorations are up in the TOC, those along with the candy we receive in care packages from home gets everyone into the holiday spirit. Rumor has it that this is the downhill slope that will continue to pick up pace and the time remaining will just fly by. I don't know how true that latter statement is, but I do know that we are all working hard as many of our soldiers go on pass and mid-tour leave. The S-2 section is sad to see SSG Mikesell depart for home (not because we will miss him, but because Minnesota is not prepared for his return home for leave.). LTC Duehring is enjoying time with his wife in Germany and the TAC is enjoying themselves while LTC Duehring is away.

We have had the opportunity of watching two of our coalition partner units come and go since we have been here. We say good-bye to our Korean and Polish friends but we look forward to making new friends and strong working relationships with the follow on units. The coalition forces have astounded us with their hard work, dedication and selflessness. These new rotations will continue to impress us and division with the work they are able to accomplish in short periods of time. From de-mining to building shelter,



A US Engineer explains the construction projects to two Koreans at FOB Sharana.

these soldiers are truly dedicated and do fantastic work.

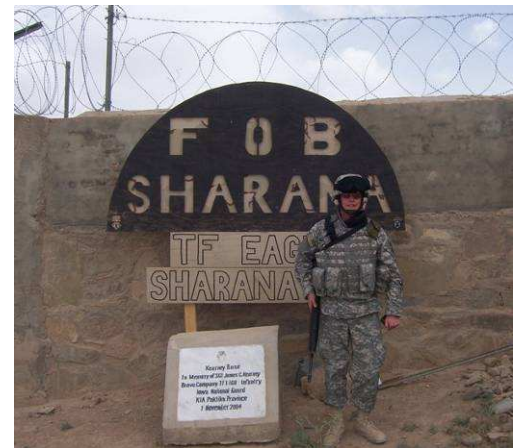
The S-3 section had the opportunity to meet some of the members of our replacement unit during our Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS). The PDSS went off without a hitch. The 36th Engineer Brigade (soon to be CTF Rugged) was able to see what missions CTF Chamberlain is currently undertaking and what missions they will look forward to taking over when we conduct a Transfer of Authority with them in early spring. The week long event was quite tedious on our guests, who could not get used to the time change and were completely mentally exhausted from the fire hose of information that we force fed them. The 36th Engineer Brigade soldiers were often seen in the TOC at ghastly hours looking for a big cup of coffee to keep them going. We look forward to keeping in touch with the 36th Engineer Brigade as they continue to plan for their deployment and we hope to set them up for success. We cannot wait to again see soldiers with the Sea Horse patch on their sleeve as that will mean we will be coming home soon after!



From left: SGT Grace, ISG Bernard, CPT Smith, ILT Stickney, MAJ Tatian, CW2 Mattieu, MAJ Weston, CPT King, MAJ Ouellette, LTC Morton, and MAJ Darveau at the annual Army ten mile run.

Six members of the S-3 section along with five others in the company took the opportunity to run in the Army 10 Miler held on Bagram Airfield on October 11, 2006. The soldiers listed below were crazy enough to run at 0030Z in the morning. For the non-military-speak time, that is 0500AM Afghan time. There were over four hundred participants who showed up to

run, ranging from Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and coalition partners such as the Koreans and French Forces. Everyone had a good time despite the long run and sore feet and muscles after the run. Hey, we even got a free shirt! As many individuals back home have heard by now, the 240th Engineer Group Headquarters will be relocating to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Sharana. The exact time frame is not confirmed, but we can safely say that we will be moving a lot sooner than later. There are many obstacles that need to be crossed before we can send down the initial TOC team to establish our new base of operations. The biggest hurdle is living accommodations. We don't have any! And then there is the temporary command and control building which doesn't exist and the communications systems that we don't have; but we will!



MAJ Darveau recently visits FOB Sharana.

Construction is currently underway by both our Korean Engineer partners (supervised by CMS) as well as Detachment 2 of the 961st Utilities (from Wisconsin).

The move to Sharana offers a small taste of home during the winter months. Snow. LOTS OF SNOW. We will experience a much colder environment because we will be at a higher elevation than we are here in Bagram. The section will have to take turns thawing out MSG Wiley –He doesn't handle the cold very well. At the time of this article, the temperature is a comfortable 60F outside and he is bundled in his fleece coat and the heat is on.

Article submitted by MAJ Darveau, the S-3 Assistant Officer in Charge



S-4 Section Staff News



LTC Richards, the S-4 Officer In Charge, is shown here hard at work in the inner chambers of the cavernous S-4 office.

The S4 section ~ Logistics. The unsung hero's that make sure that CTF Chamberlain units and unit headquarters have the money, assets, and resources (Beans & Bullets) to accomplish their missions. From the management of a multi-million dollar engineer construction budget to lining up the transportation of commodities or making sure our troops have serviceable uniforms, we are the folks working behind the scenes to make sure that operations can happen. When we're 'good' no one even knows we are there. But when something goes wrong and a mission comes to a grinding halt; the first words from the Commander to reverberate throughout the theater of operations ~ "Where's my S4?!"

Life isn't always easy for the 'loggie' and it's not a section for the feint of heart. Luckily, our S4 section is made up of folks willing & able to meet the challenge head-on. We've made sure critical bridge parts got to the right place at the right time. We've ensured that units were able to maintain continuous construction operations because critical funding was procured in time to get them the materials they needed. We've put in long days and had many short nights 'taking care of the troops'. Whether its section members sleeping on the flightline to sling-load a helicopter at first light or getting up at O'dark thirty to meet local truck drivers at the front gate, our soldiers are there to get the troops downrange what they need, when they need it.

CW2 Kathy Mathieu, our one and only Property Book Officer. She's our ultimate bean counter. She's also my secret weapon for getting tough projects done! Once Chief is on a mission ~ neither sleet, nor snow, nor rain, nor excuses, nor missing paperwork, nor hiding shall save you; she will ferret out what needs to get done and hunt down the responsible party like a bloodhound. Every time! While I know sometimes folks shudder when they find out it's their face on the milk cartoon she's packing, there is a calm assurance that she knows right where everything is or is suppose to be. Is it coincidence that she's the only Mom in our unit? You decide!

When she's not chasing down reports, property documents or inventory sheets, she's 'relaxing' by spending a few hours at the gym putting the Energizer Bunny to shame or shopping at the local post bazaar. CW2 Mathieu is from Winslow, Maine.



CW2 Matthieu holds a "Wicked Good" whoopee pie in celebration of her birthday!

SGT Jodi Pelletier, our section workhorse! Another "County person" in the section, SGT Pelletier hails from the County's hallowed St. John's Valley ~ Fort Kent. While we won't send news back to Fort Kent that she was the first person in the unit to dawn a jacket one chilly morning, we will sing her praises! SGT 'P' as the Battalions call her, processes nearly all the logistics paper work both battalions produce! She meticulously reviews each and every detail of anything forwarded to her. When the units want to know the status of a project fund request or where a form went, she's the one they call. Actually, whenever the rest of us in the section need the status on anything, she's the one we ask! She is 'on it'!

As well, her easy going personality has paid numerous dividends to the unit and section. She always seems able to get the Resource Managers to fund the little things that we never think will make the cut. Heck, one time she even managed to get a team of special operations folks to give us their special up-armored, turbo-diesel, F-550 Dually, Ford Pick-up! Of course, the whole unit was wondering how the S4 section ended up with the 'coolest pick-up' on post while the rest of the sections were saddled with the 'white weenie mobiles' or Hummers... Just more of SGT 'P's magic!



SGT Jodi Pelletier enjoys a "small" portion of a "wicked good" whoopee pie.

SFC Sean Grimshaw is the section's Swiss Army Knife. The proverbial Jack of all Trades, SFC Grimshaw has managed to hold about every functional position in a headquarters unit. He's been a supply sergeant, he knows personnel administration and he's been an operations NCO. He's bright, multi-talented and near impervious to intimidation. In short, he's the perfect sergeant to send on a difficult mission involving uncooperative parties! After a few occasions of having some of our troops come back with unsigned paperwork and sordid tales of senior officers and NCO's from other units 'lighting them up'; SFC Grimshaw was dispatched to git-r-done. 9 times out of 10, he comes right back to the office smiling with everything signed, sealed and delivered! Now when he makes his appointed rounds, it's not so much "What do you engineers need now??" it's "You again? Okay, where do I sign?"

Continued on page 5



MSG Darrell Hanning leans back in his chair, and smiles for the camera.

Continued from Page 5

Aside from shaking down Division Staff Officers for signatures, running point on logistics issues or performing as my personal desk reference for unit operations, SFC Grimshaw can be seen lounging in his hammock or parading around the compound in his Hugh Heffner bathrobe. SFC Grimshaw resides in the Augusta area.



SFC Grimshaw with 10th Mountain Division Command Sergeant Major Borja.

MSG Darrell Hanning, the section's NCOIC, is a straight-talking 'County Boy' (Houlton) fresh from the 152nd Field Artillery. He's a career 'loggie' (Logistician as he likes to say.), that knows the job cold. In a very short time, he earned the respect of our Airborne Engineer brethren and their trust ~ no easy feat. They know when MSG Hanning says something; they can take it to the bank. Being a 'County Boy', he also quickly established a network of friends and connections across units, agencies and task forces. If it can be done, and sometimes when it seems like it can't, he'll find a way to make it happen! He's an NCO and my right hand man.

S-4 News continued

And, in the footsteps of another famous (Infamous) 'logistician' from Maine, Bernie Williams, you just NEVER know what is going to come out of his mouth next! From the almost common place greeting response, "I'm holding on with both hands and feet!" to assessments like "Those Captain's are just short of drooling on themselves!", MSG Hanning has become a local source of entertainment for our subordinate battalions. The Battalion S4's are still talking about the time he stopped one of our meetings with this rejoinder: "Now wait just a daggum minute! What in the heck is a SOW (Engineer lingo for Scope of Work)?? Where I come from a sow's a pig!" or expressed his sentiments to a senior officer about his ill thought out plan, "Sir, that's just short of retarded!" Rest assured, we think we'll have enough 'Hanning-isms' to fill a book before we get home!

Specialist Roy Jones, our one man technical support operation. No ordinary specialist, SPC Jones keeps our office going. Whether it's performing CPR on my computer after I have shattered the early morning calm with desperate cries of "JONES, Post!" as my confounded computer inhales some essential report; making coffee that could wake the dead; or orchestrating the fine machinations of an agreement to keep our Polish and/or Korean partners in business; he makes things happen! Want forms and/or commodities tracked a certain way? SPC Jones will design a program to do what you need. The Polish or Korean Engineers need some creative way to procure materials or services? SPC Jones will get the ball rolling. Is your computer locking up or the printer refusing to print? SPC Jones will wander in, hit three keys and leave you wondering why you couldn't figure it out or why you aren't working for him.



SPC Roy Jones, resident computer genius.

One story that seems to sum up the essence of "Jones" is the following. One day, two of our Airborne Engineer Battalion S4's saw SPC Jones with a tele-engineer kit. Curious, as they had not yet had the opportunity to work with one, they asked SPC Jones how it worked. SPC Jones immediately launched into a detailed explanation of each and every component; how it interfaced with the other components and even the program parameters and capabilities. Completely amazed, one of the young officers told me, "I guess I was expecting an Active Duty specialist's answer ~ 'you plug it in and hit this switch to turn it on, sir'." That's our 'Jones'. SPC Jones grew up in the Topsham area and now resides in Bethel, Maine.

Then there's me, LTC Hamilton Richards, the S4. I'm the guy that has the rare privilege of working with such an incredibly talented team that they make brigade logistics a near seamless operation. My job is to keep them hopping and focused. Oh yeah, and go to meetings ~ lots of meetings! In return, they keep me straight and usually off the boss's radar.

When I'm not cracking the whip over the section, I can usually be found poring over some MoPar related literature or regaling the brigade staff with some tale of treachery & bravery involving my adventures at Division headquarters.



The soldiers in the S-4 Section

Article Prepared by LTC Hamilton Richards, S4. LTC Richards is from Jackson, Maine, located in Waldo County.



Civil Affairs Section



MSG Hayes and MAJ Weston with the village of Mollai in the background.

Hello from Bagram, Afghanistan. It won't be long before we make the move from here to Forward Operating Base Sharana, about 125 miles due south of Bagram in Paktika Province. Master Sergeant Hayes and I spent a week at FOB Sharana in May and found it to be somewhat austere but livable. The village of Sharana is nearby, and while there we had the opportunity to meet with the Governor of Paktika and accompany him and his entourage on a walk along a downtown cobblestone street, one of our projects that had recently been completed.



MSG Hayes mans the M-60 machine gun in the gunner's hatch at FOB Sharana.

Since that trip to FOB Sharana the base camp has undergone a great deal of expansion with more to come. We certainly won't have some of the amenities that we're privy to here on Bagram, but what we give up in comfort we'll make up for in support to our subordinate units, which this move is projected to enhance. Expect a reduced capability in email access and morale calls home. We'll be working to overcome this shortfall as we get there and continue with the mission. It will take patience

from us, and from our loved ones back home. But, there is good news: once settled at Sharana we'll have just about three months remaining before we begin handover with our replacements! There is light at the end of the tunnel, and it gets brighter everyday.



MAJ Weston helps out with a humanitarian aid drop in Mollai.

To date the S-5 section has managed more than \$3M in civil projects that are a fundamental component of the infrastructure reconstruction and development effort here in Afghanistan. We essentially get loads of money to develop and improve the quality of life for Afghans, and we're quite good at spending every dime allocated.



From left: MSG Hayes, SPC Hopkins, MAJ Weston, and Softy an Afghan Contractor all inspect a water holding tank in an Afghan village.

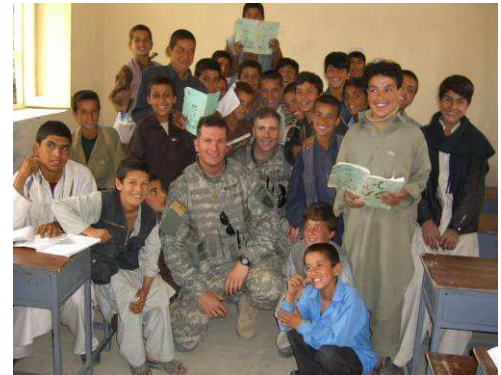
The last 27 years of Afghan history has been marked by continuous war with a devastating effect on basic infrastructure, so it's great to be in a position to positively change this.

Master Sergeant Hayes and I take pride in the job we do for CTF Chamberlain because with the completion of each project (56 to date) we can see a tangible difference in the Afghan landscape and a future brighter than the one we inherited seven months ago.



MSG Hayes observes the construction project at Sarobi.

We have had ample opportunity downrange and have walked the ground of every project site. We have seen first hand the impact of a new school in a community marginalized by Taliban oppression; marveled at the effect of a season's harvest doubled by the addition of a new irrigation system; seen the smiling eyes of an Afghan girl receiving her first pair of shoes; and witnessed the economic blessing of a cobblestone street linked to Afghanistan's main arteries.



MAJ Weston and MSG Hayes are surrounded by a group of boys at one of the Afghan schools in a village we provide aid to. Now this makes it worth it all!

We are the smallest section in the task force but have the most lasting quality-of-life impact on the development effort here. Every single day, "it's good to be the Five."

*Article written by MAJ Jeff Weston
Civil Military Operations Officer*



Construction Management Section



Engineers from Combined Task Force Cham-berlain work to construct a K-span building at FOB Salerno in Afghanistan.

Shortly after the last edition, SSG Romano re-enlisted for 6 years. Somehow, we think cash money was a factor in the decision. Note you can't see the eyes of any of the perpetrators... LT Cheever had the honors as MSG Smith supervised the "young Lieutenant".



SSG Romano re-enlists.

Another notable event that occurred recently was the Transfer of Authority ceremony for our outgoing and incoming Polish Engineers. The picture below captures the moment at the Polish Compound at BAF. Afterwards we were treated to Polish food and hospitality.



Polish Soldiers Transfer of Authority.

Our construction missions downrange proceeded at their usual breakneck speed. Below is a picture of an airfield we are paving at forward location.



Field Landing Strip at FOB Sharana.

Work continued this month on the expansion of Bagram Airfield. Our Polish partners are seen below at Bagram Airfield.



Poles and Americans commemorate the completion of a project at Bagram airfield.

MSG Smith and SSG Romano went to a forward operating base where one of our subordinate battalions are stationed and trained soldiers on K-Span building construction. Below is a picture of Task Force 27 and the 145th National Guard Unit bending the arches with the machine and lifting the last set of arches onto the building. These buildings are like the Quonset huts in the county for storing potatoes.



Engineers build K-Span building in Salerno.

Recently the Construction Management Section received a little touch from home. MSG Smith's Mother in Law sent over some awesome spaghetti sauce with all of the fixings. She actually got the sauce sent over here without breaking it. I think it had something to do with the little swimmers she placed the jars in. All were happy because a night away from chow hall is a good thing. Below is a picture of the section enjoying the meal and some great stories afterwards.



CMS spaghetti dinner from Maine.

SSG Gleason and SPC Marcotte use the GPS surveying equipment to determine the center line for a new road that the Polish Engineers will begin to build soon. You may notice that SSG Gleason is only barely holding the stake, trust can only goes so far.



SSG Gleason & SPC Marcotte place a survey stake for a new road.

Continued on Page 8



Construction Management Section (continued)

LTC Leimbach and LTC Zajac of the 37th Engineer Battalion.

Here is a picture of LTC Leimbach and newly promoted LTC Matt Zajac, XO of the 37th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Airborne). They were checking progress on a road construction project.

Another significant event was a notable birthday for a notable from our Task Forces esteemed S4 section. A virtual master of spreadsheets and financial wizardry, SFC Grimshaw is shown at his usual location adorned with appropriate ornamentation. SPC Legere and SPC Jones add to the festivities. The construction effort would be utterly lost without SFC Grimshaw's daily visits, and weekly befuddlement of the financial geniuses at Division Headquarters !



SPC Legere and SPC Jones wish SFC Grimshaw a Happy Birthday.

Article submitted by MSG Mark Smith, the NCOIC of the CMS Section





SGT Cyr receives 1000th Box from Hand and Hearts, a ministry of a church in Aroostook County. SGT Cyr is the Operations Sergeant for the 240th Engineers at FOB Salerno.

The following is a reprinting of an article that was first published in the "Signal" newspaper in Aroostook County on Sunday, August 6th, 2006.

The article was written by Josh Premako, the Senior Staff Writer for the "Signal" and can be found online at <http://www.the-signal.com>

Report from FOB Salerno

"Over time, 50 boxes packed and mailed each month add up. As a case in point: Hands and Hearts, a ministry of Christ Lutheran Church in Valencia, recently sent its 1,000th package to U.S. Army Sgt. Scott Cyr, who is serving in Afghanistan.

Over the past several years, Karolle Blackson and "hundreds" of other parishioners have been sending packages to those on the front lines, and serving as prayer warriors here at home.

She said the Hands and Hearts ministry is multi-faceted; In addition to sending servicemen and women packages with small gifts, snacks, toiletries and other items, the group encloses pictures and letters from local school-children and a personal note from whoever packs the box.

"It's not just a box of 'stuff,'" she said, it is much more than that. There are groups of church members that are regularly meeting to pray for those serving in the military.

Letters of thanks that the group receives run the gamut from eloquent letters, she said, to quickly-scrawled, dusty notes from the battlefield.

She said a constant of any correspondence received is that while the troops are always thankful for the material items in the care packages, they express more gratitude for the letters and pictures." Even if we never hear from them, that's OK," she said. "We do what we do to show the love of Christ."

In the case of Cyr, Blackson said, it was a stockpile of 400 pairs of shoes that earned him the 1,000th care package. Earlier this summer, as part of the church's vacation Bible school program, 400 pairs of children's shoes were collected to be shipped to Afghanistan, she said.

Blackson posted a request for help on an Internet bulletin board, and Cyr responded by putting the church in contact with Afghani officials. The care package program is donation-funded, she said, and a great deal of help comes from Thrivent, a Lutheran benefit and the Sunrise Rotary Club.

*Article was submitted by SGT Scott Cyr
Operations NCO, Salerno TAC*



LTC(P) Swartz makes a presentation to MAJ Pete Christie while ISG Hibl looks on. The gift was a frame for three flags along with four coins in appreciation for a job well done.

CTF Chamberlain bids farewell to MAJ Christie as he completes his six month tour here in Afghanistan and returns to Australia. MAJ Christie has been the Officer In Charge of the Mine Action Center.

Mine Clearance operations commenced at Jalalabad Airfield. This month we started a large de-mining operation, which included over 80 de-miners, 4 pieces of de-mining machinery and the assistance of Air Force and

Mine Action Center News

Army EOD assets. The cleared sites will provide land for numerous base upgrades enhancing the living conditions and operational capabilities in the region.

The project is being conducted by local Afghans hired by the Ronco Company. The MAC is providing oversight, as well as quality assurance and quality control of the operation. So far over 1, 200 pieces of unexploded ordnance have been removed, providing safe land for construction. The local Afghans working this project are very hard working, knowledgeable and as an added benefit, many speak some English allowing for a good deal of communication.

Mine Clearance operations continued here on BAF with production goals exceeding expectations. Many classes of explosive hazard awareness were conducted to include the new Korean forum joining the fight. We continue to keep our momentum and are working to close out as many tasks as possible before winter sets in. We are on track to finish out the most successful year thus far in BAF clearance operations.

MAC Personnel

MAJ Pete Christie – Australian
MAC Officer In Charge

GYSGT Jeremy Edwards – US Marine Corps
MAC Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge

SFC Patrick McKenney – 240th EN GP
Quality Assurance/Quality Control NCO

SSG Leon Bunker – Co C 27th EN BN
Quality Control NCO

SSG Jason Reed – HHC 37th EN Bn
Topographic Mapping NCO

SPC Brannon Minniefield – 10th Mtn
Training NCO

Mr. Matthew Noone – US Civilian
Army Corp of Engineers
Mine Clearance Advisor

*Article submitted by SFC McKenney,
MAC QA/QC NCO*





Chaplain Andy Gibson (LTC) stands at attention as the citation is read from an award given for his support of the Polish Soldiers.

“So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.” (2 Thess. 2:15)

A young boy walked into the kitchen on the day before Thanksgiving. He saw his grandmother busily working at the counter. “What are you doing, Grandma?” he asked. “Stuffing the turkey,” she replied. “Cool! Are we going to hang it next to the deer?”

Sounds like Maine traditions! As we move into the holiday season, it may seem particularly painful to be physically apart from our soldiers and our families. The tendency might be to not have Thanksgiving, Christmas, or

Religious Support Team

Chanukah this year. “If we can’t be together, we’re just not going to do it,” we might say. Well, I would suggest against that. Keep your traditions and share them with your soldiers through the mail and through e-mail. Tell the story of the fun you had and the sorrow you felt at not having him/her there. Deployment causes so much disruption and so much loneliness; don’t let the sadness win! Sometimes, we have to hang on just to hang on. So as Paul, who was far from his friends when he wrote the above letter, “hold fast” and share your traditions, even over the miles.

In October, CH Gibson came home on leave, while SGT Grace did an outstanding job back at BAF. SGT Grace covered the services, did the Bible Studies, handled any crises that might have arisen, did two Humanitarian Assistance drops and continued helping out the Company by editing the newsletter and handling other administrative duties. Oh, and yes, he provided a weekly movie for the troops. Great job SGT Grace!

Special thanks goes out to all of you back home that have been sending packages to our soldiers. Morale has been lifted on several occasions directly linked to getting goodies from home.

In particular some have been sending multiple boxes of humanitarian supplies such as clothes, blankets, shoes and school supplies. This has all gone with convoys to help win the hearts and minds of the Afghan population. Several civic organizations, churches and family groups have pooled their efforts and deliv-

ered a great deal of aid where it is needed. The Elks club, Dexter Shoes, Mardens, and several other groups have pooled their efforts and sent 23 boxes of shoes to CH Gibson. Each box weighed around 70 pounds, and contained about 40 pairs of shoes. Over eight hundred pairs of shoes were recently distributed. SGT Grace accompanied the Indiana National Guard Civil Affairs team to a community near Bagram named Quala Golay. This picture below shows the distribution of the shoes and other clothing items. The Afghan National Police helped us keep an orderly distribution site.



SGT Grace provides security for the humanitarian aid operation.

Article submitted by CH (LTC) Andy Gibson



Anyone desiring to submit information for the newsletter can send it by e-mail to:

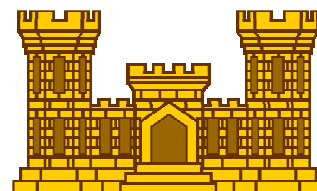
Nathaniel.Grace@afghan.swa.army.mil

Further pictures can be found at the 240th Engineer Group’s website:

http://www.me.ngb.army.mil/Family/Family_Pages/240th/default.htm

Packages intended to arrive in Afghanistan by Christmas should be mailed completed not later than Dec 4th for Priority and First Class, and Nov 27th for space available shipping. The mailing address for letters and packages is still:

Soldier’s Name (without rank)
240th Engineer Group
APO AE 09354



**Bayonet!
Forward!**



SGT Grace takes a picture of a humanitarian aid drop that included shoes from Maine